

re-discovered in Dalbeatie Forest, Kirkcudbrightshire in 1992. Since then, it has proved to be widespread and sometimes common in commercial forestry plantations in Dumfriesshire, Kirkcudbrightshire and Wigtownshire (Mearns, 1999). There are also records from Port Appin in 1986 and the Oban area in 1971 (Penny, 1987).

On the 5th October 2002, approximately 50 caterpillars of what were provisionally identified as red-necked footman were found feeding on lichen on fence posts at the eastern side of the Muirhouse Muir portion of Loch Ardsinning, Scottish Wildlife Trust reserve approximately 10 miles (16 Km) north of Glasgow. On follow-up visits on 15th and 28th June, 2003, adult moths were found; sometimes resting on low vegetation but more commonly flying around the tops of the scattered and stunted (3-7m tall) downy birch (*Betula pubescens*) that are characteristic of this part of the reserve. Forty were counted in less than 30 mins. Furthermore, more moths were seen flying over the isolated birches and over a single rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) on more open areas of Muirhouse Muir and also over an adjacent young (7-10m high) Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) plantation.

Also on 15th June, 2003, six adult Red-necked Footmen were found near High Mains, in commercial forestry of the Buchanan Castle Estate near Drymen. A further visit on 29th June, revealed abundant moths flying around the tops of 12 – 15 m high Sitka spruce and Norway spruce (*Picea abies*) in multiple areas of the plantation.

Skinner (1984) describes the moth as inhabiting deciduous and coniferous woodland and states that the larvae feed on algae and lichen on the branches and trunks of oak, beech and several species of conifer. A possible explanation for the apparent spread of the species in the West of Scotland could therefore be that, like the crossbill, goshawk and gold crest, it has been able to take advantage of commercial conifer plantations. This cannot however be the whole story as the colony at Loch Ardsinning reserve suggests an expansion into new habitats. Here, the moth flies over birch growing in rank heather. At the main site the trees are sufficiently close to each other to be collectively regarded as a small but very open copse but the moths were also associated with isolated trees. In addition, at least a proportion of the larvae at Loch Ardsinning were feeding on lichen on fence posts.

The abundance of the red-necked footman at the two Stirlingshire sites described above suggests that the species will be found to have colonised other areas in Central Scotland.

References

- Mearns, R. (1999) Update on three species of moth in south-west Scotland, *Entomologists Record* 111, 218-219.
Penny, C.C. (1987) *Atolmis rubricollis* in Argyllshire, *Entomologists Record* 99, 181-181.
Skinner, B. (1984) *Moths of the British Isles*, Viking.

HAWFINCHES AT TALLA RESERVOIR, PEEBLES SHIRE (VC?).

Margaret M H Lyth

On 11 May 2002 at about 6.30 pm I observed three male and two female Hawfinches in a field beside Talla Reservoir near Tweedsmuir, Borders.

The birds were chasing each other and I was able to observe them with binoculars from a distance of about 25 metres. After about 5 minutes they flew off towards a nearby conifer plantation. On consulting the "New Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991" by DW Gibbons *et al.*, 1993, I noticed a lack of records from around this immediate area. Since Hawfinches are rather scarce breeding birds this observation seems noteworthy.

Hawfinches are often associated with mature woods such as large broadleaved woodland estates or parks but can also be found in coniferous woods. With their enlarged bill they are capable of cracking the stones of cherry, white beam or other such hard seeds and they are also said to be fond of peas. Being an often elusive or shy species they may be more widespread than current knowledge suggests. Their main Scottish locations are in the Borders, Lothian and Perthshire with a few outposts elsewhere.

BATS IN CLARENCE DRIVE, CLEVEDEN, GLASGOW WEST END.

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Late in summer 2004, whilst I was admiring the dusk unfold on a balmy evening, two black arrows whizzed by. At first I thought they were starlings. Wrong. One the next night, at the same time, with the aid of a comfy chair I awaited their return. There they go – two bats, one slightly below the other. A pilot and wingman? a happy couple? Competitive siblings? I estimated their wingspan to be about six to seven inches, in other words about 15 to 18 centimetres, as deduced by measuring the gap between branches in a dead tree that they flew through. Were they Pipistrelle bats or the Common bat?

The two bats then flew across the floodlit football pitches behind Peckhams. Insects must have been milling around the vapour lamps – a candle light dinner for two? Whatever, it was a delight to watch them, dodging and playing. Who says bats don't have fun?

I believe that they live either in a local church or perhaps in the brick structures of the redundant chimneystacks of local tenements. I do hope they have planning permission, after all this is a conservation area.

Editors comment. This interesting and amusing account of the occurrence of bats in the West End conservation area of Glasgow is of some significance, as there appears to be no proper scientific data on bats in the Glasgow area.